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RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 0140
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 3179
RUEHPL/AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS PRIORITY 0150
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA PRIORITY 1631
RHMFISS/MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHPIGXW/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 DJIBOUTI 000425

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SUBJECT: EAST AFRICA REGIONAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE (RSI),
MARCH 16-17

REF: 2006 DAR ES SALAAM 1089

Classified By: Ambassador W. Stuart Symington, reasons 1.4 (b, d).

11. (S) Summary: East African regional ambassadors and interagency representatives agreed to institutionalize the East African RSI by requesting dedicated, line-item FY09 regional funding for East Africa, along the lines of the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorist Partnership. In this second RSI (the first was held in Nairobi, May 2006 -- see reftel), Ambassadors and interagency reps supported a set of recommendations for Washington and field offices (para 13) on improving funding coordination and transparency, addressing conditions terrorists exploit, increasing partner national CT capacity, and reconciliation and CT engagement. Participants agreed to convene a quarterly Secure Videoconference between participating Embassies and Washington, beginning in mid-June. At a March 20 Strategic Communications PCC chaired by U/S Hughes, Somalia was named a Pilot Country per the RSI Ambassadors recommendation. End Summary.

12. (S) The second East African RSI was hosted by Embassy Djibouti, March 16-17. Ambassadors and CDA,s from Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Mauritius/ Seychelles were joined by representatives from S/CT, AF, R, DS, NSC, the intelligence community, OSD, SOCOM, CJTF-HOA, DOJ and USAID. The Director of the Voice of America (VOA), Danforth Austin, was a special guest at the conference. Embassy Asmara was invited, but unable to send a representative due to conditions in Eritrea, while Embassy Sanaa and the U.S. Mission to the African Union sent representative officers. The emphasis of the conference was to identify lessons learned, best practices and recommendations for ways ahead.

Progress to Date

13. (C) S/CT Deputy Coordinator Virginia Palmer reviewed the progress of the RSI to date, noting that the requests for additional Section 1206 (\$15m) and Section 1207 (\$25m) resources are on track and the resumption of VOA Somali Service using S/CT NADR and AF ESF funds. Palmer noted the need for a flexible strategy to address the entire terrorist threat complex simultaneously: leadership, safehaven and

conditions terrorists exploit. Palmer and Ambassador Stuart Symington promoted the concept of harnessing the economic power of American business to promote wealth and private sector development. Palmer emphasized the need to secure more resources to correct the imbalance between security and civilian efforts to transform the environment, particularly in countering the ideology of the globalized insurgency.

The Policy Framework

14. (C) AF/E Director Eunice Reddick noted the improvement of the Somali situation over the past year, while expressing deep concern of the reconstitution of the Islamic Courts in Mogadishu. While the Eritreans were complicating matters, the USG was supporting AMISOM stability force deployment, and would provide experts in negotiation to support the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, currently scheduled to open April 16. Reddick noted that AF would seek additional funding for Somalia in FY08. AF/RSA Director Jerry Lanier discussed how the integration of sub-Saharan African countries into a single AFRICOM command would enhance integration of CT efforts in the region, currently split between three combatant commands. Lanier pledged to make CT funding mechanisms and decisions more transparent to the field, working with S/CT.

The Current Threat

15. (S) Ambassador to Ethiopia Don Yamamoto reviewed the background and conduct of the Ethiopian operations in

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Somalia; a decisive and expensive effort to counter the Islamic Courts and bolster the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). With the exception of Eritrea there was a strong shared regional desire to shore up the TFG. Ethiopian PM Meles continues to believe that if Mogadishu fails, so will the rest of the country, so he will keep some 7000-8000 troops outside of that city to support AMISOM security efforts. Yamamoto and CJTF-HOA Deputy Commander Rear Admiral Moon both noted the importance of quicker, more agile responses and greater agility in meeting requests to provide the Ethiopian forces with anti-Malarial medication and the Kenyans with night vision goggles.

16. (S) An intelligence briefer described how the international community had underestimated Ethiopia's will and capability to rupture the Islamic Courts and al-Qaida. Although the Kenyans succeeded in capturing dozens of foreign fighters, Al-Qaida principals who had fled to Kenya were now the focus of U.S. CT efforts in the region. The briefer described a growing body of evidence revealing that al-Qaida's association with the Islamic Courts was deep, with AQ principals Fazul and Nabhan essentially serving as cabinet ministers. Al-Qaida continues to actively plan against U.S. and key Kenyan government targets. Islamic extremists in Somalia would target Ethiopian and Ugandan troops. A broad network of extremist ethnic Somalis in the United Kingdom was becoming more apparent.

Regional Political Environment

17. (S) Ambassador Cameron Hume, Charge d'Affaires in Khartoum, led a discussion of the regional political environment. Participants discussed the systemic weakness of regional institutions such as the AU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). For this reason, our focus continues to be on state partners. Hume reviewed the rapidly growing Sudanese economy, the excellent state of U.S.-Sudanese CT partnership, the relative success of the North-South peace agreement and the violence in Darfur. Removing Sudan from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list would improve the regional dynamic by advancing positive

CT cooperation. Joey Hood of Embassy Sanaa reviewed Yemen,s Somalia policy; noting that the Yemeni Government is dead set against reconstitution of the Islamic Courts. Former Courts leader Sheikh Sharif was unable to direct Court remnants from his exile in Yemen, where he remains effectively under house arrest. The Yemeni and German governments were pressuring Sharif to engage in the national reconciliation process.

Addressing the Current Threat

18. (S) Ambassador to Kenya Michael Ranneberger led a discussion on synchronizing efforts to isolate terrorist leadership and eliminate safe havens. He emphasized that this must be a multi-pronged approach involving continued military and security actions; efforts to promote an inclusive government in Somalia; rapid deployment of U.S. development and security assistance in order to influence the Somali process and bolster the credibility of the TFG; public diplomacy efforts; and intensified regional coordination on both diplomacy and security. He noted good overall interagency cooperation in recent military and intelligence operations in the region based out of Nairobi. He and others stressed the need for American officials and contractors to visit Somalia. Such visits were essential both for operations and to effectively publicize both within Somalia and the region the good work the USG is doing in Somalia. Participants agreed that continued engagement with Somaliland and Puntland authorities was essential. Participants agreed on the urgent need to implement an international diplomatic strategy reaching beyond the region to ensure the success of Somali clan reconciliation efforts. Ambassador Ranneberger discussed the key role being played by Kenya, with respect both to security through stepped up border operations and

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cooperation with us, and in efforts to promote an inclusive political process in Somalia. He pointed to the need to bolster the capacity of Kenya to deal with the Somalia problem, particularly in light of Kenya,s close cooperation with the U.S.

Addressing the Long-Term Threat

19. (C) Ambassador to Uganda Steven Browning led a discussion on economic development, democracy and security issues as a means of addressing the conditions terrorists exploit. He emphasized that we must recognize that state actors see the region through the prism of what they perceive to be their own national interest. Museveni,s deployment of troops in Somalia is a good example of this. Regional economic institutions like COMESA and the EAC were worthy of continued support, participants agreed. Ambassador Symington pointed out the importance of regional, joint training for security and law enforcement officials and noted that language should not bar participation by Djibouti. Participants agreed that the lack of security and capacity of law enforcement organs to address crime undermined CT efforts throughout the region. More resources were needed to improve the rule of law in the region, particularly in training police, prosecutors and judges.

Public Diplomacy/Combating Extremism

110. (C) Ambassador to Mauritius and the Seychelles Cesar Cabrera led a discussion on public diplomacy. He described public diplomacy as the most important method we have to address the growing threat of terrorism. As a practical suggestion, he pointed out that the power of images was immense, and that it was important for high-ranking officials to establish relationships with cameramen, not just reporters. He also advocated outreach using popular local opinion leaders and an informal approach to convey U.S. messages to the public. Christopher Krisinger of the Office

of the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy (R) was disappointed that he could not promise new funding for initiatives discussed. He discussed the work of State,s Digital Outreach Team, which engaged in debate in Arabic websites, and the importance of unconventional key influencers, such as a politically-savvy cooking show host in Morocco. VOA Director Danforth Austin spoke on the restoration of the Somali language service. He had been approached by six FM stations who wanted to add the program to their broadcasts) a sign of the quality of the program. However, Austin noted that sustained audiences were difficult to build with only 30-60 minutes of programming a day and Ambassadors expressed hope that Washington agencies could come up with urgent funding to increase programming to four hours a day.

¶11. (U) In a discussion on Military Information Support Teams (MIST), Joey Hood of Embassy Sanaa noted their usefulness was dependent upon State PD officers providing the teams with guidance and direction. Ambassador Ranneberger noted that Embassy Nairobi was doubling the size of its MIST team and that the additional members and resources would be devoted to outreach to ethnic Somalis in the region. Cameron Hume noted the welcome development that Ambassadors were now allowed and encouraged to respond to press interview requests. Chris Krisinger emphasized that R would stand strongly behind spokespeople.

CJTF-HOA

¶12. (C) Rear Admiral Timothy Moon presented an explanation of CJTF-HOA,s mission in an RSI visit to Camp Lemonier on March
¶17. CJTF-HOA will seek to bring USAID directors together soon for a coordination conference at Camp Lemonier. Purnell Delly spoke highly of U.S.-U.K. cooperation in

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counterterrorism activities. Ambassador Cabrera praised the conduct and work of the Seabees in the Seychelles. Ambassador Browning noted that some NGO,s in Uganda were suspicious and resentful of Civic Affairs activities, while Joey Hood noted widespread suspicion and fear of the U.S. military among average Yemenis. Participants agreed that the purpose of civic affairs activities went beyond their immediate humanitarian or public affairs impact) they are designed to build a tradition of civic affairs in host country militaries.

The Way Ahead -- Recommendations

¶13. (C) Ambassadors and interagency representatives identified the following actions and recommendations for post-conference follow-up:

¶I. Improving Funding Coordination and Transparency

¶A. Establish a quarterly DCM-led teleconference between RSI participating embassies and Washington, starting in mid-June. Ambassadors recommended that invitations to the next RSI will be extended to key Senate staffers and a representative of the United Kingdom.

¶B. Establish FY09 East Africa dedicated line-item budget requests for NADR, FMF, PKO, DA and military assistance programs, along the lines of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorist Partnership (TSCTP). Seek an East Africa line item from INL for INCLE funds to reflect the essential need to enhance overall East African law enforcement capabilities.

¶C. AF/RSA will produce a cable to posts itemizing and systematizing CT funding streams and budget processes. S/CT will assist.

¶D. Recommend that a full-time regular State Department employee be seconded to the African Union staff.

II. Increase Partner Nation Capacity

¶A. Emphatically appeal for an urgent restoration of zeroed-out FY08 NADR ATA funding to counter the terrorist threat in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Djibouti, Mauritius and Seychelles. OMB removed these funding requests in the most recent budget round.

¶B. Encourage greater interstate intelligence and military cooperation on CT and Somalia, particularly among Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. Ambassadors will encourage leaders in those countries to bring their intelligence and defense chiefs together for face-to-face meetings. Participants will seek new DoD and State-funded opportunities to train these partners together and seek greater working-level interoperability. DS/ATA will organize East African regional training courses in document fraud and interdicting terrorist activity.

III. Address Conditions Terrorists Exploit

¶A. Strongly recommend that funding for VOA Somali service be increased in order to expand its hours of programming and transmission capability.

¶B. Each post will nominate existing International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) slots for a regional CT program on border control.

¶C. Appeal again to F to increase the size of the African self-help fund, an essential tool for ambassadors to identify low-cost, high-impact, high-visibility projects with a CT angle.

¶D. Encourage the Somali-American community to establish

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U.S.-Somalia Business Council, with outreach to other diaspora Somalis, particularly wealthy businessmen in the Gulf. U.S. fisheries companies may be interested in supporting such an effort, which would have the eventual prospect of support from OPIC, EXIM and TDA.

¶E. Seek a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the East African Community (EAC).

¶F. Study the NEA bureau's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and see how a similar line-item funding mechanism could be created for sub-Saharan Africa in order to put resources behind host governments, reform efforts. Seek the inclusion of Arab League members Djibouti, Somalia, and Comoros within MEPI.

¶G. Recommend that R include Somalia as a "Pilot Country". (Done March 20)

¶H. Embassies and CJTF-HOA will seek more joint public affairs opportunities. CJTF-HOA is seeking to expand its number of chaplains and their involvement in interfaith dialogue activities.

IV. Reconciliation, CT Engagement

¶A. Insist that TFG President Yusuf include representative Hawiye leaders in reconciliation process and take personal responsibility for their safe passage to talks inside Somalia. AF will seek to support the talks with negotiation experts.

¶B. Commit to continued CT engagement with Sudan. Consistent with Sudanese CT efforts, removing Sudan from the list of state sponsors of terrorism would advance CT cooperation.

¶C. Diplomatic Security will draft a plan and budget to enable USG officials to visit Somalia. Such visits will enable the U.S. to effectively conduct diplomacy, publicize USG diplomatic and assistance efforts in Somalia, and to evaluate the effectiveness of those efforts. (Done)

¶D. DOD will seek contingency and expedited press guidance for responding to news and official leaks of any future CT military operations in the Horn of Africa.

¶E. NSC will task the intelligence community with establishing a list of the 20 wealthiest/most influential ethnic Somali businessmen worldwide. This list will be utilized in cooperation with other regional State Department bureaus and their embassies to seek to leverage the influence of these individuals to support the peace process and discourage extremism.

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